

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 EA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00
COME-00 EB-08 FRB-03 INR-10 NSAE-00 SP-02 STR-07
TRSE-00 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 NEA-10 USIA-06
OPIC-03 AGRE-00 SS-15 /112 W
-----065010 010215Z /72

R 281805Z FEB 78
FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5174
INFO ALL EC CAPITALS
USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY VIENNA
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
AMEMBASSY BERN

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USEEC

GENEVA ALSO FOR MTN

PARIS ALSO FOR OECD

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EEC, ETRD, EIND
SUBJ: EC MEMBER STATE ACTIONS TO IMPEDE STEEL
IMPORTS

1. SOME EC MEMBER STATES APPEAR TO BE WAGING
INDIVIDUAL ADMINISTRATIVE CAMPAIGNS DESIGNED
TO IMPEDE IMPORTS INTO THE COMMUNITY. OTHER
MISSIONS HAVE TOLD US THAT THERE ARE NUMEROUS
REPORTS OF SHIPMENTS BEING DELAYED OR REFUSED
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AT EC BORDERS UNLESS THEY CONFORM COMPLETELY
TO BUREAUCRATIC REGULATIONS. ILLUSTRATIVE
STORIES INCLUDE A 25 TON SHIPMENT OF COILS FROM
AUSTRIA WHICH WAS SEIZED TEMPORARILY IN BELGIUM
BECAUSE ITS ACTUAL WEIGHT WAS 12 KILOS OVER THE
WEIGHT GIVEN ON THE IMPORT DOCUMENTS. IN ANOTHER
CASE SEVERAL TRAIN CARLOADS OF STEEL WERE REFUSED

ENTRY INTO FRANCE FOR REPORTEDLY MINOR OMISSIONS
IN FILLING OUT CUSTOMS FORMS.

2. EFTA COUNTRIES HAVE BEEN PARTICULARLY UPSET
WITH THESE ACTIONS AND HAVE COMPLAINED TO THE
COMMISSION WITH, THEY CLAIM, LITTLE RESULT. AN
AUSTRIAN MISSION SOURCE CLAIMED THAT AUSTRIA
WOULD CONDITION ITS ACCEPTANCE OF THE STEEL
TRADE AGREEMENT NOW BEING NEGOTIATED WITH
THE COMMISSION, ON THE COMPLETE CESSATION
OF THESE PRACTICES.

3. THE COMMISSION, FOR ITS PART, ADMITS THAT
THERE IS A PROBLEM BUT SAYS THAT THERE IS
LITTLE IT CAN DO IF CUSTOMS OFFICIALS ARE
OVERZEALOUS IN IMPLEMENTING THE NEW IMPORT
PROCEDURES. HOWEVER, IT HAS REAFFIRMED THAT
IT WILL ACT WHEN MEMBER STATES TRY TO GO BEYOND
THE DAVIGNON PLAN IN THEIR EFFORTS TO PROTECT
DOMESTIC PRODUCERS. COMMISSION STEEL OFFICIALS
POINT TO RECENT COMMISSION OBJECTIONS TO A
EUROFER ACTION WHICH WOULD HAVE REQUIRED STEEL
STOCKHOLDERS IN THE COMMUNITY TO BUY 95 PERCENT
OF THEIR STEEL FROM EC SOURCES AND SELL THE
STEEL AT PRODUCER LIST PRICES.

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4. ACCORDING TO COMMISSION COMPETITION OFFICIALS,
COMMISSIONER VOUEL SENT A LETTER TO ALL EUROFER
MEMBERS, AND TO STEEL TRADERS AS WELL, COMPLAIN-
ING ABOUT EFFORTS TO IMPOSE THESE CONDITIONS ON
STEEL TRADERS. THE VOUEL LETTER, SENT ON BEHALF
OF THE COMMISSION, COMPLAINED THAT THE AGREEMENTS
ENVISIONED WENT FAR BEYOND WHAT WAS MEANT BY THE
DAVIGNON PLAN INTENTION TO STABILIZE THE MARKET.
ANY SUCH UNDERTAKING, THE VOUEL LETTER SAID, SHOULD
BE CONSIDERED NULL AND VOID UNDER THE ECSC TREATY.
THE COMMISSION ALSO BLEW THE WHISTLE ON AN ITALIAN
PLAN TO REDUCE THE NUMBER OF AUTHORIZED CUSTOMS
POINTS FOR IMPORTED STEEL.

5. EC STEEL OFFICIALS ADMIT THAT THE FRENCH AND
ITALIAN AUTHORITIES SEEM TO BE STRETCHING THE
LAW AS FAR AS THEY CAN AND THAT BELGIUM AND
THE NETHERLANDS APPEAR TO BE OVERLY STRICT ON
OCCASION. THEY SAY THAT THIS HAS ADDED TO DELAYS
AND FREIGHT COSTS FOR ALL IMPORTERS INCLUDING
OTHER MEMBER STATES. SO FAR, THOUGH, THE COMMISSION
HAS NOT BEEN ASKED TO LOOK INTO THE MATTER BY

ANY OF THE MEMBER STATES. HINTON

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